



**NORTH DAKOTA**  
DEPARTMENT *of* HEALTH

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## NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release:

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**North Dakota Department of Health Reminds Parents That Now is the Time to Think  
About Back-to-School Immunizations**

BISMARCK, N.D. – The North Dakota Department of Health and Department of Instruction are encouraging parents to get their children vaccinated now to avoid the back-to-school rush later this summer.

Before entering school, children should have five doses of DTaP (diphtheria, tetanus and acellular pertussis), four doses of IPV (polio), three doses of HBV (hepatitis B), two doses of MMR (measles, mumps and rubella), and two doses of varicella (chickenpox) vaccine. There also are vaccines that are required for adolescents when entering seventh grade. Seventh grade requirements include an immunization against tetanus, diphtheria and pertussis (Tdap), and meningococcal disease (MCV4). The vaccine that protects against meningococcal disease is also required for newly admitted North Dakota college students residing in on-campus housing. Other vaccines may be recommended by health-care providers.

“By requiring vaccines, we hope to minimize the spread of preventable illnesses in schools and provide North Dakota’s children with a healthier environment to learn,” said Valerie Fischer, Director of Safe and Healthy Schools. “Children should get vaccinated as soon as possible to ensure they are protected before the first day of school.”

“Approximately 10 percent of kindergartners and one-third of middle school students were not up-to-date with the required vaccines during the 2013-2014 school year,” said Amy Schwartz, Immunization Surveillance Coordinator. “According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, North Dakota ranks fifth to last in the United States for immunization rates for measles, mumps, and rubella vaccine for kindergartners.”

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| In an effort to increase ~~kindergarten~~-immunization rates, the Department of Health will be sending letters to all children who will be attending kindergarten or seventh grade next year who have not yet been vaccinated with required vaccines.

Children can be vaccinated at local public health units or private health care providers. For more information on school immunization requirements, contact Amy Schwartz, North Dakota Department of Health, at 701.328.2335, or visit our website at [www.ndhealth.gov/immunize](http://www.ndhealth.gov/immunize).

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